

Comment adverbs and viewpoint adverbs

A

We use some adverbs to make a *comment* on what we are saying.

<i>some comment adverbs:</i>	<i>examples</i>
☆ indicate how likely we think something is	apparently, certainly, clearly, definitely, obviously, presumably, probably, undoubtedly
☆ indicate our attitude to or opinion of what is said	astonishingly, frankly, generally, honestly, interestingly, luckily, naturally, sadly, seriously, surprisingly, unbelievably
☆ show our judgement of someone's actions	bravely, carelessly, foolishly, generously, kindly, rightly, stupidly, wisely, wrongly

Comment adverbs often apply to the whole sentence and are most frequently used in front position (see Unit 75A), although they can also be used at the end of the sentence and in other positions. At the beginning and end of sentences we usually separate them from the rest of the sentence by a comma in writing or by intonation in speech:

- ☐ **Presumably**, he didn't hear me when I called.
- ☐ The book was based on his experience in China, **apparently**.
- ☐ If you practise continuously, you will **undoubtedly** get better.

Comment adverbs which show judgement usually follow the subject, although they can be put in front position for emphasis:

- ☐ He **kindly** offered to give me a lift. (or **Kindly**, he offered ... to emphasise 'Kindly')

If comment adverbs apply to only part of the sentence they can be used in other positions. Compare:

- ☐ **Astonishingly**, she did well in the exam. (= I was surprised that she did well) *and*
- ☐ She did **astonishingly** well in the exam. (= she did extremely well)
- ☐ You've had a major operation. **Obviously**, it will be very painful for a while. (= I expect you to know this already) *and*
- ☐ When he stood up it was **obviously** very painful. (= the pain was clear to see)

B

Some adverbs are used to make clear what *viewpoint* we are speaking from; that is, identifying what features of something are being talked about:

- ☐ **Financially**, the accident has been a disaster for the owners of the tunnel.
- ☐ The brothers may be alike **physically**, but they have very different personalities.

Also: biologically, environmentally, financially, ideologically, industrially, logically, medically, morally, outwardly, politically, technically, visually

A number of phrases are used in a similar way:

- ☐ **Politically / In political terms**, this summer is a crucial time for the government.

Also: politically speaking, in terms of politics, from a political point of view, as far as politics is / are concerned

Some adverbs or phrases are used to say *whose* viewpoint we are expressing:

- ☐ The head of National Bank is to receive, **according to reports**, a £1 million bonus.
- ☐ **In my view**, the foreign minister should resign immediately.

Also: to my / his / her (etc.) knowledge, from my / his / her (etc.) perspective, personally, in my / his / her (etc.) opinion

Exercises

- 78.1** Rewrite the italicised words using an adverb from the box. Choose the most likely position for the adverb. **A**

~~astonishingly~~ bravely carelessly generously
interestingly obviously presumably rightly

- 1 *It was very surprising indeed that* no paintings were destroyed by the fire in the gallery.
Astonishingly, no paintings were destroyed by the fire in the gallery.
- 2 As you drive off the ferry, there are lots of different flags flying by the side of the road.
It seems likely that the idea is to welcome visitors from other countries.
- 3 *Acting more kindly than they needed to*, the builders agreed to plant new trees to replace the ones they had dug up.
- 4 Most people believe *in a correct way* that the prisoners should be released.
- 5 *It was easy to see that* she knew more about the robbery than she told the police.
- 6 He broke the window when he was painting *because he wasn't paying attention to what he was doing*.
- 7 She picked up the spider and put it outside, *showing no fear*.
- 8 *I found it strange that* the road didn't appear on the SATNAV.

- 78.2** Complete the sentences with an appropriate viewpoint adverb from (i) and an ending from (ii).

B

(i)

environmentally financially
industrially medically
outwardly politically
technically visually

(ii)

... we'd be much better off if we moved there.
... the performance was stunning.
... it is relatively undeveloped.
... she looked remarkably calm.
... she could be sent to prison.
~~... the doctors can't find anything wrong.~~
... it is no longer the problem it once was.
... he claims to be a socialist.

- 1 Thomas says that he is still getting severe headaches, although ...
medically the doctors can't find anything wrong.
- 2 As she stepped onto the stage she felt terrified, but ...
- 3 Now that lead is no longer added to most petrol, ...
- 4 The country earns most of its income from agriculture and ...
- 5 The band didn't play terribly well, and the singing was awful, but ...
- 6 The cost of living is much lower in the north, so ...
- 7 Hansen is one of the richest men in the country, although ...
- 8 Julie is likely to be fined for failing to pay her gas bill, although ...

- 78.3** Complete the sentences using the phrases from B either with the words from the box (or adjectives or adverbs formed from them) or your own words. **B**

architecture democracy geology grammar ~~history~~

- 1 *Historically speaking*, in what ways has disease affected the development of Western civilisation?
- 2 limestone is a relatively new rock.
- 3 The building is similar to the opera house in Milan
- 4
the essay was well written, but its style was inappropriate.
- 5 The election was clearly rigged and the result is a severe blow to the country